

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 /079 W

-----093950 271202Z /47

R 270835Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8242

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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E.O.11652: N/A

TAGS: XF, PLO, MY

SUBJECT: PLO AND ISLAMIC CONFERENCE REPS VISIT MALAYSIA

REF: (A) JAKARTA 9658 (NOTAL; (B) SINGAPORE 3129 (NOTAL;
(C) 76 KUALA LUMPUR 4455 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: VISITS BY PLO AND ISLAMIC CONFERENCE REPS TO MALAYSIA
IN PAST FEW DAYS, ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY UNEXCEPTIONAL IN SUBSTANCE,
HIGHLIGHT MALAYSIAN TIES WITH MIDDLE EAST AND ISLAMIC BLOC.
END SUMMARY.

2. FOLLOWING VISITS TO JAKARTA AND SINGAPORE (REF A), THREE-
MEMBER PLO DELEGATION LED BY FAROUK ASAD KADOUMI VISITED
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MALAYSIA JULY 23-25, MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER JULY 23
AND PRIME MINISTER JULY 25. ACCORDING TO PRESS ACCOUNTS,
KADOUMI BRIEFED FM RITHAUDDEEN ON PLO POSITION ON PALESTINE
QUESTION AND FORTHCOMING MIDDLE EAST PEACE CONFERENCE AT
GENEVA. RITHAUDDEEN REPORTEDLY REITERATED CUSTOMARY MALAYSIAN
POSITIONS, TELLING NEWSMEN FOLLOWING MEETING THAT "AS A MUSLIM
NATION, MALAYSIA IS COMMITTED TO THE PALESTINIANS' CAUSE AND

WILL SUPPORT IT AT ALL LEVELS TO SEE THAT A JUST SOLUTION IS FINALLY ARRIVED AT". DURING HIS HALF-HOUR MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN, KADOUMI REPORTEDLY CONVEYED A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM PLO CHAIRMAN YASSER ARAFAT AND LEFT A "DISCUSSION PAPER" WITH THE PM. KADOUMI TOLD NEWSMEN THAT THE PM HAD REITERATED MALAYSIA'S "FIRM SUPPORT" FOR THE PALESTINIAN DEMAND FOR A NATIONAL HOMELAND, SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE, NOTING THAT THE PLO WAS GRATEFUL FOR MALAYSIA'S "MORAL AND POLITICAL SUPPORT."

3. KADOUMI'S VISIT OVERLAPPED WITH THAT OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION (ICO) SECRETARY GENERAL DR. AMADOU KARIM GAYE, WHO ACCOMPANIED BY ICO ECONOMIC ADVISER DR. ASHRAF UZ-ZAMAN, MET WITH A NUMBER OF GOM OFFICIALS JULY 20-24 BEFORE TRAVELING ON TO MANILA. FOLLOWING MEETING WITH GAYE JULY 21, FOREIGN MINISTER RITHAUDDEEN REPORTEDLY TOLD NEWSMEN THAT HE HAD ASSURED THE FORMER OF MALAYSIAN WILLINGNESS TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN PROMOTING ECONOMIC COOPERATION AMONG MEMBER COUNTRIES. GAYE ON HIS PART REPORTEDLY BRIEFED THE FM ON INTERNATIONAL ISSUES RELEVANT TO THE ICO IN ADDITION TO DETAILING ITS PROGRESS IN ECONOMIC, TECHNICAL AND COMMERCIAL MATTERS. GAYE ALSO CALLED ON PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN, FINANCE MINISTER RAZALEIGH, AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN WHO, SINCE LEAVING OFFICE IN 1970, HAS ACTIVELY PROMOTED COOPERATION AMONG ISLAMIC NATIONS AND WHO CURRENTLY HEADS THE MALAYSIAN ISLAMIC WELFARE ASSOCIATION (PERKIM).
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4. ACCORDING TO A KNOWLEDGEABLE MIDDLE-LEVEL MFA OFFICIAL, PRIMARY PURPOSE OF GAYE'S VISIT WAS INDEED TO DISCUSS WORK OF ICO, ESPECIALLY IN ECONOMIC FIELD, RATHER THAN HIS MEDIATORY ROLE RE THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINE MUSLIM PROBLEM. NEVERTHELESS, HE IS ON HIS WAY TO MANILA TO DISCUSS THE MORO NATIONAL LIBERATION FRONT (MNLF) AND DID TOUCH ON THIS MISSION IN DISCUSSIONS WITH GOM REPS. MFA CONTACT NOTED THAT ICO, WHICH HAS A FORMAL ROLE AS MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOP AND MNLF, CONSIDERS MALAYSIA TO HOLD A KEY POSITION, SINCE UNLESS MALAYSIA AGREES TO ANY SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM IT CANNOT BE IMPLEMENTED. WHEN QUERIED WHETHER INCLUSION OF MALAYSIA IN CONSULTATIONS ON THE SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES PROBLEM IS BECAUSE OF A SUSPICION OF A CONTINUING GOM ROLE IN AIDING THE MUSLIMS, MFA OFFICIAL SAID, "NO, MALAYSIA'S ROLE, LIKE INDONESIA'S, IS LIMITED TO THAT OF A NEIGHBORING ISLAMIC COUNTRY WHICH HAS PARTICIPATED IN THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE'S INVOLVEMENT WITH THIS MATTER FROM THE BEGINNING."

5. COMMENT: MALAYSIA HAS CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED ARAB CAUSES IN THE PAST, INCLUDING PLO OBJECTIVES. NEVERTHELESS, MALAYSIA REMAINS BASICALLY MODERATE. ITS SUPPORT FOR ISLAMIC CAUSES

STEMS BOTH FROM THE IMPORTANCE OF ISLAM IN THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL
CONTEXT AND FROM PECUNIARY MOTIVES RATHER THAN FROM SYMPATHY
WITH RADICAL ARAB SOLUTIONS TO MIDDLE EAST POLITICAL PROBLEMS.
IN THIS REGARD, IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT GAYE'S VISIT, CAST IN
TERMS OF BREAD AND BUTTER ECONOMIC MATTERS, RECEIVED CONSIDERABLY
MORE PRESS PLAY THAN DID THE PLO DELEGATION'S VISIT. FINALLY,
DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE
GOM ALLOWS THE PLO TO MAINTAIN A RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE IN
KUALA LUMPUR, IT IS UNENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT ACCORDING THE PLO
OFFICE INDEPENDENT DIPLOMATIC STATUS (TO THE BEST OF OUR
KNOWLEDGE THE PLO REP STILL OPERATES OUT OF THE LIBYAN EMBASSY
AND USES LIBYAN POUCH FACILITIES - SEE REF B).
MILLER

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